

JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Special Issue on
***“Contemporary Issues in International
Business and Entrepreneurship”***

Published by

MEDEC, UiTM

(Malaysian Entrepreneurship Development Centre, Universiti Teknologi MARA)

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JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

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PREFACE

Dr. George O. Tasie
Guest Editor

*Special Issue on "Contemporary Issues in International Business
and Entrepreneurship"*

Previously technology, globalisation, and trade liberalisation did not play a dominant role in business environments, but today the approach is totally different. The millennium is characterised by globalised trading system and the predominance of the revolutionary information technologies. This scenario is where the real challenge is for the entrepreneuristic persons and organisations, raising the issue of how entrepreneurs and business organisations respond to the demands of the globalised markets and the fierce competition of business organisation in the so-called "borderless world".

The papers in this special volume of Journal of Business and Entrepreneurship (JIBE) explain some of these challenges by providing in-depth and analytical information on various topics of international business interests. For instance, the article on service quality demonstrates the extent in which customer satisfaction and expectations have become a popular area of academic attention and economic development of society. Other articles also draw on the importance of internationalisation of businesses, such as global marketing, organisational reputation, Swedish entrepreneurship, the impact of currency in business and scores of other thought-provoking research papers.

The articles chosen for this special issue represent and reflect the crucial challenges facing international business and management during the past and present economic crises. Although the current worldwide economic crisis has eased and most of the countries affected are on the way to recovery, we have to recognise the factors contributing to the crisis.

It is hoped that this volume will contribute towards creating an awareness of the need for better business practices and excellent management ideas across the world. I am optimistic that wider readers will benefit largely through reading this particular issue.

Above all, I must record my thanks and profound appreciation to the contributors of articles to this issue, and especially Professor Zafar U. Ahmed for affording me an opportunity to guest edit this special issue. Finally, I wish to thank the JIBE's Editorial Board and the reviewers for the job well done. Without their invaluable contribution, the publication of this special issue would not have been possible.

PROFILE OF GUEST EDITOR

Dr. George O. Tasie

George O. Tasie, Ph.D (Manchester), M.Sc (Leicester), M.P.A; B.Sc (Hon) (Liverpool), M.M.S (London), is Head, Department of Management Studies at the University of Brunei Darassulam [UBD], Brunei. His teaching interests are in general management, human resource management, human resource development, organisational behaviour, and international management. His professional work and experience in academia has taken him to the U.S.A, the United Kingdom, Malaysia, Australia, Singapore, the Philippines, Indonesia, Brunei, Vietnam and Nigeria. The publication of one of his books on "Public Sector Administration and Management" was sponsored by the University of Malaysia Sarawak, where he was an associate professor before joining UBD. He has contributed articles to other internationally accredited journals. Dr. Tasie has also written and published books on rural financial planning and management. He has been involved in short courses and consultancy works for a variety of organisations in the U.S.A, U.K, Singapore, Nigeria, Malaysia, Brunei and JASPOC (Joint ASEAN Senior Officers' Course). His current research interests center on business-government relations, training and development and stress management in Southeast Asia.

SPORT MEGA-BRANDS: CASE STUDIES IN INTERNATIONAL MARKETING

James Santomier, Jr.

Abstract

The complexity of the sport industry, growing interest in sport entertainment, increasing competition, influence of technology, and growing convergence of consumer needs are prompting multinational sport enterprises to leverage brand equity and extend their global reach. This paper examines: 1) sport marketing trends associated with international marketing; 2) vertical integration across the sport industry; and 3) global marketing and branding strategies of selected sport "mega-brands."

Findings indicated a high degree of vertical integration across the sport industry and that media transnational corporations (TNCs) are distribution channels for a wide variety of sport entertainment. It was determined that media TNCs facilitate the global marketing and branding strategies of their sport properties as well as other sport enterprises by leveraging synergies in advertising, marketing, program development, Internet resources, sponsorship, and cross-promotion.

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INTRODUCTION

Globalization research is concerned primarily with two phenomenon: 1) the ways transnational corporations (TNCs) facilitate the globalization of capital and production; and 2) the transformation in the global scope of particular types of TNCs, especially those owning and controlling the mass media, notably television channels and transnational advertising agencies (Sklair, 1999). Sport entertainment (broadcasting and events), viewed merely as content by media TNCs, facilitates their global marketing efforts. Concomitantly, professional sport league organizations, such as the U.S.-based National Basketball Association (N.B.A.), franchises such as the New York Yankees and England's Manchester United, sport marketing/ media corporations such as International Management Group (I.M.G.), and sporting goods TNCs such as Nike, Adidas-Salomon, and Reebok are among the sport enterprises taking advantage of media exposure and implementing their own integrated global marketing strategies. Focusing on the TRIAD (European Union, Japan, and the United States), this paper examines sport marketing trends driving globalization, vertical integration within an increasingly more complex sport industry, and the global marketing and branding strategies of selected sport "mega-brands."

Research Objectives

The research objectives of this paper are: 1) to identify specific sport marketing trends directly associated with international marketing; 2) to examine the degree of vertical integration across the sport industry; and 3) to examine global marketing and branding strategies of selected media TNCs and sport mega-brands.

SPORT MARKETING TRENDS

Milne and McDonald (1999) identified sport marketing trends worldwide in the form of: 1) rapid adoption of technology; 2) creation of new consumption opportunities; 3) forging of innovative partnerships with corporations; 4) development of modern sports facilities; and 5) the opening of new markets. The following sport marketing trends, originally identified by Bandyopadhyay and Bottone (1997), are modified within the context of this paper, to reflect the rapid globalization of sport:

- Through a variety of product extensions and development of new revenue generators, sport enterprises are capitalizing on emerging worldwide opportunities;
- Sport worldwide is changing as a result of the strong influences of media, government, and business;
- Promotions and advertising are increasing. Through print, broadcast, Internet, indoor and outdoor media, worldwide promotion is important for increasing revenue;
- Licensed sport merchandise is an important area of revenue development globally, however, the market is a cyclical one, with apparel remaining as the core of the licensed merchandising business;
- Individualizing the team relates to the trend of promoting individual athletes, such as Michael Jordan, over the team, providing fans worldwide with opportunities to identify with players at an emotional level;
- Technology, especially the Internet and cable television, is enhancing the entertainment value of sport worldwide;
- The role of television in marketing and branding of sport products internationally is on the increase;
- Sport is continuing to build a solid foundation with young people across the globe;
- Sport TNCs, especially professional leagues and franchises, are selling the core product by building the augmented product. (Bandyopadhyay & Bottone, 1997)

The Global Imperative

A recent editorial in *The New York Times* (2001) stated that sport is the final element in the global expansion of American mass culture and that U.S.-based professional franchises and leagues are “going global” in search of expansion opportunities. The U.S. operations of numerous professional sport franchises are experiencing significantly reduced revenues due to: 1) ticket prices that are well beyond the means of most sport consumers; and 2) an over dependence on luxury seating (Howard, 1999). In the U.S. “middle-class families and fans are less frequently able to afford the games and are gradually losing interest in watching them” (Araton, 1998, p. 63). The National Basketball Association’s (N.B.A.) TV ratings, for example, have hit lows both on General Electric Co.’s NBC and on the league’s cable outlet AOL Time Warner Inc.’s Turner Sports. In addition, injuries to promising players have hindered efforts to promote new stars to replace Michael Jordan. Because of the importance of sport in North American culture, professional leagues and franchises must continually pursue strategies to reinvent themselves in the national consciousness. “Competing for the fan’s attention and dollar has proven to be an arduous task” (Bandyopadhyay & Bottone, 1997, p. 14).

Manchester United and The New York Yankees

The marketing partnership recently announced between Manchester United and The New York Yankees, two of the world’s most valuable sport franchises, emphasized their desire to become global franchises, and their inability to do so independently. The New York Yankee franchise, although enjoys a large domestic market share, is aligning itself with Manchester United to make up for a lack of international coverage. The partnership enhances brand equity, facilitates the sale of licensed merchandise for both teams, and provides numerous possibilities for sponsorship and television contracts (The New York Times, 2001).

The reality for most U.S.-based professional sport league organizations and professional franchises is that although most of the world listens to American music and watches American films and television shows, where sport is concerned, a large portion of the world audience would rather watch F.C. Barcelona, Manchester United, and A.C. Milan. World audiences did not consider U.S. sport entertainment until Michael Jordan and Tiger Woods captured their attention (The New York Times, 2001).

The globalization of sport entertainment has created billion-dollar franchises and properties such as the World Cup, the Olympics, the U.S.-based National Collegiate Athletic Association (N.C.A.A.), Manchester United, Federation Internationale de Football (F.I.F.A.), the N.B.A., and the U.S.-based National Football League (N.F.L.). Sporting goods mega-brands such as Nike, Adidas-Salomon, and Reebok dominate world markets. For these TNCs that have both global marketing and asset strategies in place, the world is not just an event advertising platform, but a manufacturing and distribution arena that concentrates production and packaging in the Asia-Pacific region and marketing and distribution in North American and Europe (Schaaf, 1995).

Global Strategies

Sport entertainment and sporting goods TNCs currently involved in globalization have implemented either integrated global marketing strategies or partially globalized strategies that may include communications, pricing, and distribution, as well as strategic elements such as segmentation and positioning. They have focused on three basic approaches: 1) a global product strategy allowing sport mega-brands to leverage the fact that significant investments for producing and developing their products on a global basis have already been made; 2) a global advertising strategy using the same brand name in all international markets (used successfully due to the convergence of consumer needs that lead to similar anchor values, customer values, and positioning); and 3) a global branding strategy using the same brand name or logo worldwide.

Nike, Adidas-Salomon, Reebok, F.I.F.A., Manchester United, the New York Yankees, the N.F.L., and the N.B.A. are leveraging their brands across many international markets, adding prestige to the image of their brands and increasing brand equity. Brand equity is a “set of assets such as name awareness, loyal customers, perceived quality and associations that are linked to the brand (its name or symbol) and add (or subtract) value to the product or service being offered” (Aaker, 1991). For professional sport franchises, the actual franchise value and merchandise sales figures are considered a major part of overall brand equity; however, they do not reflect the value of the intangible components of the sport experience (Milne & McDonald, 1999). Intangible components of sport entertainment are particularly important to the assessment of brand equity since sport consumers leave sporting events (and broadcasts) with little more than perceptions and memories (Mullin, Hardy, & Sutton, 2000).

A conceptual framework (see Appendix for details) for assessing brand equity in the sport industry was developed by Gladden, Milne, and Sutton (1998). The framework addresses the components of brand equity, the antecedents, and the consequences of brand equity. The four components of brand equity are: 1) perceived quality; 2) brand awareness; 3) brand associations; and 4) brand loyalty.

Perceived quality refers to the importance that consumers place on the benefits and attributes associated with the sport product, or the attribute-based components of brand equity. Closely related to perceived quality, brand awareness refers to the likelihood and ease with which a brand name will be recalled. Brand awareness is important for brand equity because: 1) it increases the likelihood that a brand will be considered by consumers; 2) it affects decisions about brands in the product category or consideration set; and 3) it influences the development and depth of brand associations (Keller, 1993).

Brand associations are intangible, non-attribute related components of brand equity. In sport entertainment, brand association represents the experiential and symbolic attributes offered by a particular sport event, team, or player. The emotional identification with a specific event, team, or individual, for example, the Olympics, Manchester United, or Tiger Woods, and the exhilaration derived from actually attending a sport event are considered brand associations. Brand loyalty is the ability to attract and retain customers. The inconsistent nature of the sport product creates some difficulty in retaining customers, however, this can be compensated for by creating high levels of "fan identification," through emphasis on overall customer satisfaction as the main reinforcement tool for repeat purchase (Milne & McDonald, 1999).

Understanding the antecedent conditions of brand equity is especially important for sport marketers internationally because each has a particular influence on the four components of brand equity and, therefore, can be leveraged to improve brand equity. The antecedent conditions include: team-related (team success; the head coach; and star players), organization-related (reputation and tradition; schedule; and entertainment package/ product delivery), and market-related dimensions (media coverage; geographic location; competitive forces; and support) (Milne & McDonald, 1999).

Concerning organization-related and market related antecedents, both Manchester United and the New York Yankees are revered worldwide within their respective

sports, deliver a dynamic and enjoyable entertainment package, have extensive media coverage regionally and globally, are at the highest competitive levels, and have significant loyal fan support around the world. The consequences of enhanced brand equity include: 1) media exposure; 2) merchandise sales; 3) corporate support; 4) atmosphere (the excitement and level of entertainment provided by attending an event); and 5) ticket sales. "Through continual feedback loops consumer perception impacts both the antecedents and overall brand equity. Therefore, although the antecedents create the initial levels of equity, the consequences derived from such equity also increase (or decrease) the brand equity of a sport team" (Milne & McDonald, 1999, p. 47).

Manchester United is a professional sport franchise with an extremely high level of brand equity based on a number of antecedent conditions. One team-related antecedent condition relates to the former General Manager (head coach) of Manchester United, Matt Busby. Busby ultimately became one of the legends of world soccer and, prior to retirement in 1969, he won seven European Cup championships. By 1970, Manchester United was the best-supported team in England and remained so despite the fact that it did not win a title during the next 20 years. In terms of support, Manchester United has no peer across English soccer and perhaps only Barcelona, Real Madrid, and Bayern Munich compare in world soccer (Szymanski, 2001).

Manchester United is the world's most valuable sport franchise and the wealthiest team in world soccer. In 2001, it is expected to generate approximately \$200 million in income, compared with an average of \$50 million among Premier League teams. Manchester United's huge brand equity explains why it is valued at more than \$1 billion, why Nike signed a 15-year, \$440 million licensing deal with the team and why it was able to bypass the U.S.-based Major League Soccer (M.L.S.) league to make a deal directly with the New York Yankees (The New York Times, 2001). In October 2000, Manchester United named Cheetham Bell as its first full-time advertising agency specifically to initiate a global brand building campaign.

The New York Yankees also sustain a very high level of brand equity. In terms of antecedent conditions, the New York Yankees have a long tradition of team success (measured by World Series victories), a lineage of "legendary" head coaches such as Casey Stengel, Yogi Berra, and Billy Martin, and numerous player icons such as Babe Ruth, Lou Gehrig, Roger Maris, Mickey Mantle, Reggie Jackson, and Derek Jeter.

The Manchester United/ New York Yankees marketing partnership will enable each franchise to leverage its high level of brand equity in the other's markets, sell each other's merchandise, and explore joint sponsorship opportunities and television contracts. The Yankees would like to own their own television channel as Manchester United does, so it is plausible that at some point the two franchises will televise the other's games. The New York Yankees are clearly interested in gaining exposure in the Asia-Pacific region, where Manchester United's games are televised regularly and where cultural collectivism generally leads to high levels of brand loyalty.

With a retail store recently opened in Singapore and another planned for Malaysia, Manchester United is clearly ahead of U.S.-based professional sport franchises. YankeeNets, which controls the N.B.A.'s New Jersey Nets and the National Hockey League's (N.H.L.) New Jersey Devils in addition to the New York Yankees, plans to organise a U.S. tour for Manchester United in 2003, open Manchester United soccer camps in the U.S. and sell its merchandise in its team stores.

VERTICAL INTEGRATION AND THE GLOBAL MEDIA GIANTS

According to McChesney (1997, p. 1) "a specter now haunts the world: a global commercial media system dominated by a small number of super-powerful, mostly US-based transnational media corporations. It is a system that works to advance the cause of the global market and promote commercial values." These global media giants successfully use vertical integration, a strategy by which growth occurs through the acquisition of other entities in the channel of distribution, to increase markedly the globalization of capital and production in sport entertainment (Stotlar, 2000). The global media system developed quickly, with the two largest corporations, AOL Time Warner and Disney, recently increasing their non-U.S. revenues from approximately 15% in 1990 to between 30% and 35 % in 1997 (McChesney, 1997).

Disney

Disney exemplifies vertical integration in sport entertainment. Its sport properties include controlling interests in the N.H.L. Anaheim Mighty Ducks, the Major League Baseball (M.L.B.) Anaheim Angels, ABC Sports, and ESPN (including ESPN2 and ESPNNews).

“With the purchase of ABC’s ESPN.... Disney has possession of the unquestioned global leadership. ESPN has three U.S. cable channels, a radio network with 420 affiliates, and the ESPN Sports-Zone website (McChesney, 1997, p. 5). By 1997, ESPN International, dominant in televised sport, was broadcasting 24 hours a day in 21 different languages covering 165 countries.

According to Araton (1998, p. 63), “the sports cable networks never sleep, and when they run short of programming, than can always make something up.” This is exactly what ESPN did when it created its Extreme, or X Games. ESPN then created the Global X Games division to facilitate the worldwide growth of this action-sports franchise. The X Games brand in particular and action sports in general is an important strategic global initiative for ESPN.

In 2001, four first-time X Games related events are scheduled outside the US: the Japan X Games Qualifier; the European X Games Qualifier; the Latin American X Games Qualifier, and the Australian X Games Qualifier. Top qualifiers in those events are eligible to compete in the X Games Global Challenge. The Global Challenge will consist of an individual and team competition among teams from Asia, Europe, Latin America, Japan, Australia/New Zealand, Canada, and the U.S. (Brockington, 2001, Feb. 19-25).

Another ESPN enterprise is ESPN Star Sports, a 50-50 joint venture between ESPN and News Corporation’s Asian regional broadcaster Star TV. ESPN Star Sports has obtained the rights to England’s Premier League (which includes Manchester United) matches for the next three years across Asia. Soccer is extremely popular in many parts of the Asia-Pacific region, including Japan and Australia, and ESPN Star Sports supposedly reaches 250 million viewers across Asia.

The composition of the consortium that won the international rights to broadcast the Premier League matches across Asia points to the complexity of the global media system. In addition to ESPN and Star Sports it included the television unit of the U.S.-based sport marketing giant I.M.G. and Canal Plus, a major European pay-television company based in France. Another member of the consortium was the television unit of I.M.G.’s rival, sport marketing firm, Octagon Group, which is part of the huge U.S.-based Interpublic Group of advertising agencies (Flagg, 2001).

AOL Time Warner

By 1997, AOL Time Warner, the largest fully global media company had over 200 subsidiaries worldwide, including approximately 1000 movie screens outside of the US. Its strategy focuses on global television with emphasis on programming and channels. AOL Time Warner's key brands include AOL, Netscape, Warner Bros., Time Inc. Publishing, Warner Music Group, Home Box Office (H.B.O.), The Warner Brothers Network (WB Network), Turner Network Group, and Warner Cable.

AOL Time Warner has recently announced a restructuring of its Turner Broadcasting System (TBS) Network to create a new Network division within the TBS system that will now include the Turner Basic Cable Networks and the WB Network, creating the largest television network group. Cable networks in the division include TBS Super Stations, Turner Network Television, CNN/US, CNN Headline News, CNNfn, CNN/SI (Sports Illustrated), Turner Classic Movies, and Cartoon Network.

AOL Time Warner's sport properties include M.L.B. Atlanta Braves, N.B.A. Atlanta Hawks, N.H.L. Atlanta Thrashers, the Goodwill Games, Turner Sports, and Sports Illustrated (Miller, 1999). Ted Turner, now Vice Chairman of AOL Time Warner, first used sport entertainment as a loss leader when he bought the Atlanta Braves franchise in 1976. The purchase, at least in part, was to insure programming content for his Channel 17 TV station, which later became TBS (Cagan & deMause, 1998).

The Goodwill Games, owned and operated by AOL Time Warner, is an important global event for Turner Sports. TNT is scheduled to air 120 hours of programming including a mixture of live and taped coverage. To date, Turner has generated approximately \$10 million in sponsorship money for the 2001 Goodwill Games, scheduled for Brisbane Australia. DaimlerChrysler's Jeep, Gillette's Duracell battery brand and Phillips Electric recently signed as sponsors, while other sponsors include Foster's Brewing and Qantas Airways of Australia.

The Goodwill Games are an example of an extremely integrated marketing and media package. In addition to commercial time on the television coverage of the event and a presence on the official Web site (www.goodwillgames.com), sponsors secure marketing rights to the 2001 Goodwill Games brand name. Sponsors also receive tie-ins to Turner's multimedia Goodwill Games promotional campaign. Print promotional ads include the

sponsor's corporate logos that are expected to run in such AOL Time Warner magazines as *People*, *Entertainment Weekly* and *Sports Illustrated*. Foster's and Qantas are designated as worldwide sponsors while Jeep, Duracell, and Phillips are U.S. sponsors. Turner currently syndicates the Games to more than 100 countries (Brockington, 2001, March 5-11)

News Corporation

Rupert Murdoch's initial global strategy for News Corporation was, in fact, dependent on sport entertainment to create the market for pay TV. In Britain and Australia broadcasts of rugby, soccer, and cricket compelled consumers to purchase cable boxes or satellite dishes (Deutschman, 1998). Murdoch acknowledged that much of News Corp's success was attributable to the formation of a vertically integrated global media company and that his attempt to buy Manchester United was focused on generating "content" (Reeve, 1998). News Corp., which operates in nine different media on six continents, now has ownership or partial control of the Los Angeles Dodgers baseball franchise and the N.B.A. Los Angeles Kings, interests in other professional franchises, sport venues, and Fox Sports.

Fox Sports U.S., Fox Sports Australia, and Gaora in Japan recently signed a multi-year television rights agreement with the National Association of Stock Car Auto Racing (NASCAR), a privately held U.S.-based marketing giant that is striving for global recognition. In 2001, NASCAR races will be broadcast across more than 60 countries outside the U.S. via live telecasts, same-day coverage or on a tape-delay basis. Another European broadcaster, Eurosport, which is available in 62 countries, is carrying the full 2001 NASCAR Winston Cup Series schedule (Brockington, 2001, March 12-18). News Corp.'s Internet BU Foxsports.com (www.foxsports.com) was re-launched during the summer of 2001. Foxsports.com reflects the production style of Fox Sports' television products and promotes and extends its products online. The goal is for Foxsports.com to become the leader in interactive television. Internet portals such as Yahoo, AOL, espn.com and sportsline.com have significant distribution and promotion partnerships with the professional leagues across the world (Lieberman, 2001).

Disney, News Corp., AOL Time Warner, and U.S.-based Cablevision collectively own or control a substantial portion of the world's sport and entertainment complex. But

problems do exist for these media giants. "The trend of the elite sports teams and television rights being bought up by the many-headed media conglomerates like Fox, Turner and Disney is creating a nightmare of hidden agendas and potential conflicts" (Araton, 1998, p. 63).

Even with U.S.-based media TNCs and Murdoch's News Corp. firmly in control of sport entertainment, media giants in the Asia-Pacific region (NHK, Fuji Television, Nippon Television Network, PBL-Australia, China Entertainment Television), Europe (Bertelsmann-Germany, Havas-France, BBC, Canal Plus-France), Brazil (Globo), and Mexico (Televisa) are currently challenging their global dominance. For example, DirecTV Latin America, ISL Worldwide, and the Federation Internationale de Football (F.I.F.A.) recently announced that DirecTV Latin America acquired exclusive broadcast rights to the FIFA World Cup competitions in 2002 and 2006 as well as to other FIFA world championships. DirecTV, owned by U.S.-based Hughes Electronics Corporation, a subsidiary of the General Motors Corporation, expects to air over 1,000 hours of digital F.I.F.A. World Cup-related programming. The agreement covers all television and radio broadcast rights in Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Uruguay and Venezuela and reflects a value of more than \$400 million (TV Sports File, 2000).

SPORT MEGA-BRANDS

N.B.A.

"Watching from overseas in the 1990's it was often hard to tell just what the N.B.A. was. Was it a sports league; a global merchandiser; a public relations company building a global brand? Or was it a bit of all three?" (Tagliabue, 2000, p. B1). It is clear that after the Barcelona Olympics, where the "Dream Team" (comprised of the N.B.A.'s finest and most popular players) first appeared, the N.B.A. initiated a global marketing campaign, in part, to offset reduced attendance, television ratings, and merchandise revenue in the U.S. The NBA is currently broadcasting to more than 200 countries in 44 languages and makes its games and products available to consumers worldwide via the Internet, television, and telephone (Tagliabue, 2000).

The N.B.A. is strategically building a strong consumer base across Germany and France. In Germany, where Premier World, Germany's largest pay-TV channel (owned by Bertelsmann), broadcasts roughly 1000 hours of American sports per year including baseball, hockey, football, and track and field, nearly half is the N.B.A. In September 2000, the N.B.A. and Deutsche Telekom MobilNet GmbH (T-Mobil), a wholly owned subsidiary of Deutsche Telekom AG, announced a new marketing partnership.

The multi-year agreement establishes T-Mobil as the first official country-specific sponsor of the N.B.A. The agreement was essentially an expansion of T-Mobil's two-year event sponsorship that originated in 1999. The event, the T-D1 NBA Basketball Challenge, was open to players of all ages and abilities and attracted over 29,000 participants during the first two years. T-D1 is the service brand of T-Mobil. "Aligning with one of the world's telecommunications giants emphasizes the global appeal and impact of N.B.A. basketball. As one of Germany's most respected corporations, T-Mobil is the perfect company for us to partner with in Germany, a primary international market for the N.B.A." (Stern, in Tagliabue, 2000, p. B14). T-Mobil will advertise on German broadcasts of N.B.A. programming and will also run consumer-oriented N.B.A.-themed promotions and have the opportunity to sponsor N.B.A. pre-season games, interactive events, grassroots programs and competitions (The Sports Industry Daily, 2000).

In France, according to the Director of Canal Plus in Paris, fans of American sport want just two things: pro basketball and the Super Bowl. "We literally started with the N.B.A. It's part of our history and our identity. It's modern, it's young, it's creative, and those are our ideals" (Deniset, in Tagliabue, 2000, p. B14). Canal Plus broadcasts approximately 50 games per year, which includes the All Star Game and the N.B.A. playoffs. Canal Plus also owns the broadcast rights for Spain and Italy, the biggest N.B.A. markets across Europe, after Germany and France.

As the N.B.A.'s brand equity increased throughout Europe in the early 1990s, its licensed merchandise sales soared and stores such as Decathlon in France and Venator's Footlocker unit opened hundreds of outlets and in France and Germany at least six magazines devoted to basketball were launched. What was critical to the N.B.A.'s globalization efforts, especially in Europe, was the growing presence of European

players. Even with Michael Jordan's retirement and the waning popularity of the post-lockout N.B.A. in Europe, the N.B.A. is still pushing its global expansion.

Foreign players continue their important role in the global marketing and branding strategy of the N.B.A., which presently includes 44 players from 27 countries. The executive vice president of N.B.A. global media properties considers the international audience incredibly important and indicated that every division of the N.B.A. was responsible for the global audience (Lieberman & Kavanah, 2001). The sixth annual N.B.A. "Global Week" was completed in March 2001. The Internet based promotion is an attempt to capitalize on the fact that more than one-third of the traffic on its website (www.nba.com) comes from outside the U.S. The promotion focused "on a different world geographical area or country each day in showcasing relevant N.B.A. players and offering chats, greeting cards via Yahoo, cultural information, and live streaming audio in Spanish and Chinese" (Lieberman & Kavanah, 2001, p. 7).

Perhaps the most interesting partnership for the N.B.A. and the Women's National Basketball Association (W.N.B.A.) is with AOL, the world's leading interactive services company. Their multi-year strategic alliance includes extensive promotion of NBA.com (www.nba.com) and WNBA.com (www.wnba.com) on multiple AOL properties, significant on-air promotion of AOL during N.B.A. on TNT and N.B.A. on TBS game telecasts and on W.N.B.A. game telecasts, significant AOL advertising in non-game N.B.A. programming, and the opportunity for users of AOL brands to easily access N.B.A. and W.N.B.A.'s content and commerce.

AOL will feature and promote N.B.A. and W.N.B.A. content and online initiatives across its family of global interactive brands. It enables users of AOL, CompUServe, AOL.COM, Netscape, Digital City, and ICQ to readily access the N.B.A.'s and W.N.B.A.'s content and the N.B.A. Store on NBA.com. In addition, N.B.A. and W.N.B.A. content will be integrated throughout the AOL brands, including the AOL Sports and Kids Only Channels. AOL will have the rights to use N.B.A. marks and player names in connection with a basketball fantasy game to be developed on AOL properties.

NBA.com and WNBA.com will be licensed to use several AOL tools, including AOL Instant Messenger (AIM) and AOL Search. NBA and WNBA will also take advantage

of AOL Digital City's local expertise to explore local club ticket sales and additional cross-promotional opportunities. The N.B.A., W.N.B.A. and AOL companies will engage in additional extensive online and offline cross-promotion.

Through this new alliance, AOL and CompUServe members and users of AOL's Web brands will have access to: 1) exclusive, specially-produced nightly video highlight packages produced by N.B.A. Entertainment, the production and programming arm of the N.B.A. and W.N.B.A.; 2) digital photos and real-time game statistics from Game Stats, the leagues' premium data feed; 3) featured content from NBA.com and WNBA.com for the AOL brands, including co-branded "Welcome Mats" offering AOL and Compuserve members convenient access; and 4) opportunities to purchase, through AOL, subscriptions to NBA.com's Audio League Pass and WNBA.com's Audio Season Pass, the leagues' premium audio service offering fans the live radio broadcasts of every N.B.A. and W.N.B.A. game (The Sports Marketing Newsletter, 2000).

Reebok International Ltd.

Reebok International Ltd. is perhaps the best example of a sport mega-brand successfully implementing an integrated global marketing strategy. Reebok's objective is to become the number one sport/fitness brand in the athletic shoe market, estimated at \$12 billion, and achieve a 30 percent world market share. Reebok recently spent \$140 million on promoting its brand name and consolidated its advertising under the Leo Burnett ad agency (Lewis, 2001).

Perhaps the most effective element of Reebok's global strategy was to discontinue e-tailing in March 2000, in favor of using Reebok.com (www.reebok.com) strictly as a marketing and branding tool. Reebok discontinued Internet sales because 1) sales on the site were creating negative feelings among retailers; and 2) it saw an opportunity to use the site for something that had nothing to do with direct sales, which amounted to only .07 percent of total sales.

"The move, part of a corporate strategy aimed at cutting costs and boosting market share, now seems prescient" (Lewis, 2001, p. 82). In 2000, Reebok stock rose 234 percent, which was the best performance in the U.S.-based S&P 500. "Reebok's

downsizing Internet presence is taking on its most rigorous challenge, as a marketing channel in the company's Defy Convention global brand campaign, launched January 28th, 2001 (Super Bowl Sunday)" (Lewis, 2001, p. 82).

Reebok's global strategy also includes endorsements and sponsorships. Tennis superstar Venus Williams, through her agent International Management Group (I.M.G.), has recently signed a \$40 million endorsement deal with Reebok — the most lucrative ever for a female athlete. The Williams sisters signed one year ago with IMG, the global sports marketing and management company responsible for negotiating Tiger Woods' \$100 million contract with Nike (Weintraub, 2001).

Reebok recently signed a deal the U.S.-based National Football League (N.F.L.) that provides Reebok with approximately \$250 million in new business. The N.F.L. gave Reebok a ten-year exclusive license to supply and market on-field uniforms and sideline apparel. The agreement, which begins in 2002, has required Reebok to establish a special business unit (BU) to manage outfitting all of the N.F.L.'s 32 teams. Reebok also received the exclusive right to develop a line of N.F.L.-branded apparel and fitness equipment. Previously, the N.F.L. business was divided among Nike, Inc., Puma AG, and Adidas-Salomon AG (Investor's Business Daily, 2001, January 19).

A Reebok brand, Rockport shoes, is currently positioned to be the worldwide leader in innovative comfort products. In 2000 Rockport introduced proprietary DMX technology into many of its products and launched a global strategy that includes an upgraded Web site. The interactive Rockport site (www.rockport.com) offers global users a number of innovative and unique features, including a personalized footwear recommendation based on a series of lifestyle questions. After consumers find a selection of Rockport products that best match their lifestyle and footwear needs, they can then move into the Experience section of the site, that offers several features that help to bring the company's message of physical and emotional well-being to life around the world. Reebok also owns Ralph Lauren Footwear and the Greg Norman Collection.

Adidas-Salomon

When Adidas bought Salomon for \$1.3 billion in 1997, the company's product base and global reach immediately expanded and its position in the \$100 billion global sports-

equipment market was strengthened. The acquisition of Salomon, which makes ski equipment, golf clubs, and bicycle components, particularly enhanced Adidas' position across Asia and North America, where it was weak. Salomon makes finely engineered products that command premium prices and deliver higher margins than apparel and footwear. Salomon's TaylorMade brand is the No. 2 golf brand in the U.S. and its bindings are the industry standard for both downhill and cross-country skiing.

Adidas is not capable of matching Nike's marketing power, but its spending will become more efficient. For example, it may introduce TaylorMade golf bags and apparel; so spending on that brand will cover a wider range of products (Woodruff & Trinephi, 1997). It was recently announced that growth of TaylorMade products was attributed to strong sales in Japan and strong demand for the company's products from consumers and professional golfers (Mullen, 2001).

A new global marketing program recently unveiled at a New York City press conference stated that Adidas-Salomon's mission is to be the leading sports brand in the world again. To achieve this, according to the head of global marketing, "Adidas needs to be known as a design-oriented company, making cool and contemporary products. Adidas products must become status symbols for the young urban market" (Stamminger, quoted in Lefton, 2000, p. 1). In order to facilitate its new global marketing strategy, Adidas has created three BUs:

- The Forever Sport Division ("Engineered to Perform"). This division includes the company's performance products that currently account for 90% of sales;
- The Original Division, which now accounts for 10% of sales, but Adidas's goal is to bring it to 25-30%. This division will focus on lifestyle products. It will resurrect the Trefoil logo, which, along with the Adidas performance logo (originally the Equipment logo), are two of the three best recognized sports product logos in the U.S.; and
- Equipment ("Simply Unexpected"). This unit will use the performance logo with the word "equipment" under it. The goal of this BU is to develop multi-functional products with cutting edge designs for the upscale customer. (Leand, 2000)

A new Adidas global advertising campaign now airing across Europe, the Asia-Pacific region, and parts of Central America, but not in the U.S., features four international athletes. The campaign, "Adidas makes you better," includes four television spots featuring Martina Hingis (tennis star) as the "ambassador of coolness," Sergio Garcia (golf star) as the "ambassador of warmth," Jonah Lomu (rugby star) and several teammates, as "ambassadors of support," and Ato Boldon (athletics star) as the "ambassador of lightness." The campaign also is implemented through the Internet, point-of-sale, and outdoor ads (Frank, 2001).

SportsLine.com, Inc., the publisher of CBS SportsLine, and its majority-owned European subsidiary, Sports.com Limited, signed a letter of intent to form a marketing and global e-commerce relationship with Adidas-Salomon. Under the terms of the three-year multi-million dollar deal, Adidas will advertise its brand and product offering on CBS SportsLine.com (www.cbs.sportsline.com) and Sports.com (www.sports.com) sites. Additionally, Sports.com, currently operating sports Web sites in Germany, the UK, France, Italy and Spain, will make Adidas products available throughout its e-commerce stores in local languages. The joint venture will cover Europe, the U.S. and other territories where SportsLine.com and Sports.com establish themselves, such as the Asia-Pacific region. Sports.com will also receive off-site advertising and sponsorship sales support through Adidas media. (SGB's Inside Sporting Goods, 2000).

ASICS

In an unexpected turn of events, ASICS, the Japanese apparel and footwear TNC decided against developing a sponsorship agreement with U.S. sprinters. Instead, it signed two European sprint champions as part of a \$1.48 million two-year investment in British athletics. According to an ASICS executive, its "aim was to improve the way we are perceived by young kids and the company made a decision to go with sprinters. The choice for us was clearly with the U.S. or Britain." Asics chose to go with the British athletes instead of U.S. sprint stars because of the criticism the American 4 X 100 relay team received for their posturing and gesturing during their lap of honor and the medal ceremony at the Sydney Olympics (Sport Business, 2001).

ASICS did, however, renew its partnership with the New York City Marathon by signing a multi-year agreement with the New York Road Runners Club. The long-term

relationship entitles ASICS to become the official footwear and apparel sponsor of the Marathon, the world's largest one-day spectator sporting event. Also, the relationship provides a marketing platform to celebrate ASICS' 50th anniversary. As part of the comprehensive marketing partnership, ASICS will create a co-branded NYC Marathon apparel collection including jackets, tights, t-shirts, shorts and singlets that will be sold in retail stores world-wide. In addition, the company will outfit more than 16,000 volunteers with official NYC Marathon apparel (Sport Business, 1999).

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Findings

Concerning the first research objective, it was determined that several sport marketing trends have a direct impact on international marketing. They include: 1) the rapid adoption of technology, especially use of the Internet by media TNCs and sport enterprises for branding purposes; 2) the development of creative relationships between media TNCs and sport enterprises, demonstrated by the marketing partnership between the New York Yankees and Manchester United; and 3) the opening of new markets for sport entertainment across the globe, especially the Asia-Pacific region.

Related to the second research object, a high degree of vertical integration exists within the sport industry. Media TNCs such as Disney, AOL Time Warner, and News Corp., are basically distribution channels for a wide variety of sport entertainment content and are instrumental in facilitating the global marketing and branding strategies of their respective sport properties and numerous other sport related enterprises, especially TNCs such as Reebok, Adidas-Salomon, and Nike.

The final research objective relates to the global marketing and branding strategies of selected sport mega-brands. Their strategies, facilitated by media TNCs, focus on leveraging synergies in advertising, marketing, program development, and Internet resources as well as creating cross-promotion opportunities across business units. In addition, media TNCs develop advantageous joint marketing and broadcasting agreements among themselves. These arrangements enable sport entertainment mega-brands such as The New York Yankees, the N.B.A., and Manchester United to leap

onto the global playing field by passing traditional international marketing development stages.

International Marketing Implications

- Sport entertainment's universal appeal, and the convergence of consumer needs around the world, creates efficiencies in adapting to local markets.
- Technology, specifically the Internet, is emerging as an important dimension of an integrated global marketing and branding strategy.
- In an era of collaboration, mergers, acquisitions, and networking, TNCs continue to create "tie-ins," sponsorships, joint ventures, and cross-promotions to enhance global marketing and branding strategies.
- Strong global brands do not simply happen; they are developed over time through vision, strategy, and resource commitment.
- Vertical integration of the sport industry will continue to enhance brand equity and drive global marketing and branding strategies of selected TNCs.

The Asia-Pacific Region

Although the Asia-Pacific region is home to neither a giant media TNC nor a globally recognized professional sport franchise, it will play an increasingly important role in the global expansion of sport. Media TNCs and sport enterprises such as The New York Yankees, NASCAR, F.I.F.A., the N.B.A., the N.F.L., the X-Games, etc., have identified the Asia-Pacific region as a major marketing opportunity. In fact, Manchester United has about as many fans in Thailand as it has in England (The New York Times, 2001). With the possibility of Chinese players entering the N.B.A., this year's X-Games qualifiers in Japan, Beijing hosting the 2008 Olympics, and the growing strength of Asia-Pacific media corporations (Gaora, NHK, Fuji Television, Nippon Television Network, PBL-Australia, and China Entertainment Television), the Asia-Pacific region will become more than a manufacturing base for sporting goods mega-brands. It will become a dominant player in the global sport entertainment game.

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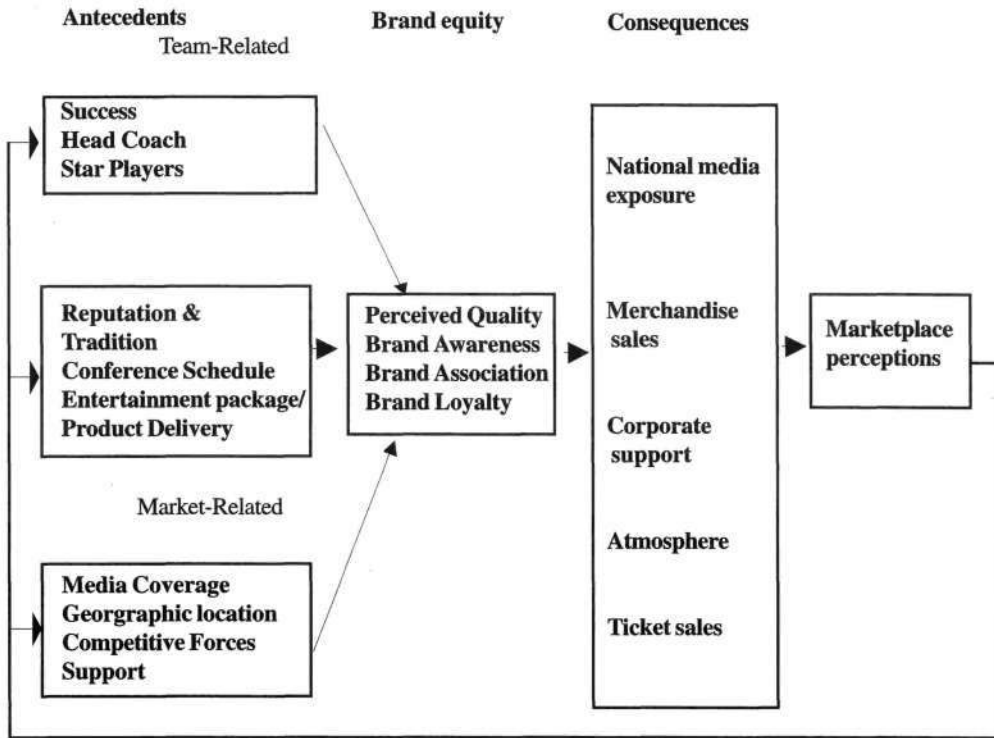
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APPENDIX



Conceptual Model for Assessing Brand Equity
 (Gladden, Milne and Sutton 1998)